

Documentation of *Ukiah* New Boiler Installation in 1914

By: Christopher Edwards

2020

This document contains all known details about the building and installation of the Freeman Dryback boilers on the ferryboat *Ukiah*. These boilers are still extant on the ship (rebuilt in 1922 and renamed *Eureka*). The information is drawn from documents in the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Collection, held at the California Department of Parks and Recreation Statewide Museum Collections Center.

Schedule for Installation of New Boilers

The following data is from progress reports of the Mechanical Department at the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company. Details captured in these documents include what the project was, when it was authorized, when it was begun, and the percentage of completion each month. The entries below show the timing of how the new boilers project proceeded.

<u>Date of Document</u>	<u>When Authorized</u>	<u>Date Begun</u>	<u>Percentage Completed</u>
October 1912	October 23, 1912	—	0%
November 1912	"	—	0%
December 1912	"	—	0%
March 1913	"	March 10, 1913	5%
April 1913	"	"	10%
May 1913	"	"	15%
Ending June 30, 1913	"	"	20%
Ending July 31, 1913	"	"	25%
August 1913	"	"	35%
September 1913	"	"	50%
October 1913	"	"	50%
January 1914	"	"	60%
February 1914	"	"	70%
March 1914	"	"	80%
April 1914	"	"	100%

It is not clear whether the final entry indicates only that the construction of the boilers themselves had been completed or that the whole project of building them and installing them in the ship was completed. Information on exactly when *Ukiah* was in and out of service is useful here.

Monthly Steamer Service Reports (March and April, 1914)¹

¹ At the time of conducting this research, I was not fully aware of the purpose for which I would use these documents. Thus, for the sake of efficiency of time and iPad memory, I took photos only of the documents that appeared to show details of interest. The months that are shown cover March and April, 1914, the period in which the old boilers were likely dismantled and removed and the new boilers installed. For comparison, I also photographed the document for the month of December, 1913. With hindsight, I should have also photographed January and February of 1914 as well as May, 1914. A further trip to the California State Archives would be of use to document these additional months and to show whether *Ukiah* was or was not in regular service before and after March and April, 1914. When this is done, this paper will be updated.

Based on my analysis of a sampling of documents entitled “Steamers Service Reports,” I believe 100% completion means the boilers were both fully constructed as well as installed in the vessel. First, they clearly show that the *Ukiah* was out of service for repairs for almost two months in March and April of 1914, presumably rendering service for the last two days of April. [See table below.] During this period of time, the previously mentioned “Important Work” reports show that the new boilers project was listed as being 80% complete in March and 100% complete in April. This implies that the “Important Work” reports were tracking the entirety of the project, both the construction and installation of the new boilers, not just their fabrication.

Like the above reports on “Important Work,” the Steamers Service Reports were monthly. These reports document numerous details of monthly service and how it compared to the same month of the previous year. Analysis of pertinent details of these reports follows.

Monthly Operation Details of Steamer *Ukiah* in Northwestern Pacific Monthly Service Reports²

Please note, that both “days in service” and “days out of service” in these reports were compared to the same month of the previous year. This is indicated by the numbers that follow the years. Additionally, all days out of service were listed as being “Under Repair.”

Days in Service

December 1913/1912: 20/31

March 1914/1913: 0/12

April 1914/1913: 2/15

Days Out of Service

December 1913/1912: 11/0

March 1914/1913: 31/19

April 1914/1913: 28/15

Authority for Expenditure Request

Further, one last document supports the conclusion that “100%” indicates that the four new boilers were both fully constructed and installed: “Authority for Expenditure Request”³ describes additional work that was necessary for the installation of the boilers. It is repeated in full here:

In connection with installation of new boilers in Steamer “Ukiah”, it was found necessary to renew keelsons and other timber, and to provide special support for the tracks carrying cars over the boilers. Also to renew fire and circulating pumps, piping, etc.

² “Steamers Service Report,” Multiple Reports: December 1913, March 1914, & April 1914, Series 1: Office of Master Mechanic and Superintendent of Steamers/ Mechanical Department Records, Box 1, MS 56, Northwestern Pacific Railroad Collection, California Department of Parks and Recreation Statewide Museum Collections Center.

³ Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company – Authority for Expenditure – Request No. 703, “Operating Expenses, Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company-Steamer ‘Ukiah’,” Series 4: Authority for Expenditure/ Executive Authority Records, Box 7, MS 56, Northwestern Pacific Railroad Collection, California Department of Parks and Recreation Statewide Museum Collections Center.

This document maintains a bit of ambiguity in that it is still not completely clear whether the boilers were both constructed and installed in the ship and that all associated work was finished. It may mean that the work was still ongoing. However, the phrase "...it was found..." does appear to imply that the installation of the boilers was finished. Otherwise, it would make more sense for them to use a word such as "has" instead of "was" found. Additionally, within the context of the other documentation so far uncovered, it appears that these documents cover the full range of the project. This includes construction of the new boilers, the dismantling and removal of the old boilers, the additional structural and machinery work found necessary in connection with the new boilers, and the actual installation of these boilers.

Additional research will be conducted, but at this time it is believed that the new boilers project for the Ukiah became official in October of 1912, physically began (most likely with the supplier starting construction of the boilers) on March 10, 1913, and was fully completed with the ship back in service with these new boilers by the end of April, 1914.